

Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee:

As a parent of students in the New Canaan public school system, a member of the New Canaan Board of Finance and a former PTC President of Saxe Middle School, **I strongly oppose SB 738, SB 457, and SB 874** or any other bill that opens the door to forced or incentivized regionalization of Connecticut Public Schools. Make no mistake, incentive-based regionalization, is forced regionalization as well - there is no carrot there. No district will be able to forego capital project funding from the state for long.

My husband and I moved to our town for the school system, it attracted us here, we are raising our three children here, it keeps us here. Connecticut has already destroyed the economic value of being a state resident through taxes and its inability to get budgets under control and not addressing the ever-increasing unfunded pension crisis. As a Realtor in New Canaan, the evidence already shows the state is losing its residents and taxpayers due to this and people continue to leave. Our market is down significantly in the last five years and the uncertainty that these bills have already created and the uncertainty that will continue for the next two years if the consolidation committee is appointed under SB 874, is very detrimental to our local markets.

I cite 2 sources (and there are many more) which outline the population decrease in CT:

- [Connecticut ranks 3rd in Country for people moving out](#)
- [CT fourth highest state in out state migration](#)

This will present another reason preventing people and new businesses from deciding to move to the state, adding to the economic quagmire of the state.

These bills now want to open the door to solving the state's economic failings on the backs of students and parents. The ever-increasing unfunded state pension liabilities and the new lockbox on transportation funds are now necessitating a new revenue stream for the State in the form of school taxing districts formed through this consolidation scheme. I have news for you, it will fail miserably and add to the problem. You will remove one of the last remaining reasons for those of us who chose the state as a place to live due quality education, and we will leave. We work very hard and have sacrificed to choose this district. Using our family as an example, there is no other reason to stay, the economic advantage has disappeared, the education advantage will be taken away - we will leave.

These bills do not even begin to touch on the following points:

- Actual verifiable financial facts that combining resources saves money
- No mention of school quality impact, impact of larger school sizes, student-teacher ratios
- No study of impact to student commute time, and resulting quality of student life, at a time when schools are struggling with debate over start and end times of the school day
- Impact to those in Special Education that are already most at risk

- The potential loss of community that currently exists in our towns centered around parent involvement in our schools.
- Impact to property values, town values, and resulting impact to CT economy

Do not try to solve economic problems with a proposal that does not attack the root cause of issues and puts it on the back of other areas that are working well for the state. Here is a novel thought, form a study group to target the mismanaged and/or underperforming city schools and research what the top performing school districts are doing right instead. None of these bills consider current best practices of the top performing districts at all. Look to see how non-profits may come together as a team to offer support to those most in need in these schools to improve the educational outcomes of students. Set up a task force on decentralization, since studies have actually shown that decentralization has improved outcomes and reduced costs.

I hope you will consider these points and oppose SB 738, SB 457, SB 874, and any other legislation that opens the door to forced or incentivized/coerced regionalization of Connecticut public schools.

Maria Weingarten

New Canaan